

**COLLEGE STUDENTS' FAVORABLENESS OF  
PERCEPTION CONCERNING MARRIAGE**

By

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1967

**Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate College  
of the Oklahoma State University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the Degree of  
MASTER OF SCIENCE  
May, 1971**

Thesis

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MASTER OF ARTS  
MAY 1971

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author wishes to express appreciation to all who have helped in the completion of this study.

Special appreciation is extended to Dr. Nick Stinnett, Associate Professor, Family Relations and Child Development, whose encouragement, patience, and guidance made the study possible.

Appreciation is also extended to Dr. Josephine Hoffer, Acting Head of the Department of Family Relations and Child Development, and Dr. James Walters, Professor of Family Relations and Child Development, for their helpful suggestions and critical reading.

The author is especially appreciative of the support and help given throughout graduate study by the members of the faculty in the Department of Family Relations and Child Development.

Special mention of appreciation go to the author's husband, Dan, for his support throughout the period of graduate study, to her daughter, Priscilla, and to Lee Cate for her help in completing this study.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### Statement of Problem

Among the major issues which unmarried youth may consider are the attitudes and perceptions which they and their prospective mates have concerning marriage (Satir, 1964). The nature of a person's behavior in marriage is strongly influenced by the favorable or unfavorable perceptions he has developed toward marriage (Stinnett, 1971).

Research and classroom instruction which encourages youth to examine attitudes and perceptions concerning marriage may contribute to greater self understanding and more positive behavior in marriage (Stinnett, 1971). Some research reveals that unmarried youth often have unrealistic stereotypes of marriage and family life (Duvall, 1965). These unrealistic stereotypes are influenced in part by the emphasis mass media place on superficially romantic relationships rather than realistic ones. Negative stereotypes of marriage have also been promoted by the fact that the mass media often emphasize the problems and disadvantages of marriage rather than the assets and advantages. Marriage has also been degraded and ridiculed often in the mass media.

Other factors contributing to negative stereotypes of marriage are suggested by Womble (1966) who relates that some students perceive marriage as undesirable because they feel inferior to others and thus are



unworthy of marriage. A previous love affair or guilt feelings for past actions may sometimes result in unfavorable attitudes and perceptions concerning marriage. Unrealistic ideas as to what a marriage partner should be like may contribute to some people forming unfavorable attitudes and perceptions concerning marriage because no mate could meet such idealistic standards. Additional factors mentioned by Womble as possibly leading to unfavorable attitudes and perceptions concerning marriage are fear of financial pressures of marriage, fear of loss of personal freedom, and fear of marriage itself.

A person's attitudes and perceptions concerning marriage are conditioned by the total family pattern (Landis, 1970). Stinnett (1971) found that the majority of college students perceived their parents as having the greatest influence on their attitudes toward marriage. The parental marriage is a child's first and most continuous source of information regarding marriage. His concept of marriage is influenced in large measure by the quality of his parent's marriage relationship *y then happy* (Wallin, 1954). In fact, the one factor which has been found by various research studies to be most closely associated with marital adjustment is happiness of the parents' marriage (Kirkpatrick, 1963). Landis (1970) suggests that college students from happy homes have greater confidence in making a successful marriage than those students from unhappy homes.

A person's attitudes and perceptions concerning marriage may also be strongly influenced by the peer group. The school, church, and mass media in general may also be significant influence upon one's attitudes and perceptions concerning marriage.

One of the first steps in eliminating unrealistic stereotypes of marriage is for teachers and counselors to be informed of the attitudes of unmarried students toward marriage. As Stinnett (1971) has suggested a need exists for more extensive and more recent research concerning youth's attitudes and perceptions concerning marriage. At the present time there is a very limited amount of research concerning unmarried youth's favorableness of perceptions concerning marriage. When teachers and counselors have current information about youth's perceptions concerning marriage, they will be better prepared to develop student-centered marriage education courses that motivate and benefit the student in developing healthy and more realistic attitudes and perceptions concerning marriage.

#### Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of this study was to examine college students' favorableness of perceptions concerning marriage and to relate their favorableness of perceptions concerning marriage to selected factors.

The specific purposes of this study will be:

(1) To develop the Favorableness of Perception concerning Marriage (FPM) Scale in order to measure the college students' favorableness of perception concerning marriage.

(2) To relate the FPM Scale scores to each of the following selected background variables: (a) sex, (b) age, (c) religious preference, (d) sibling position, (e) residence for the major part of the respondent's life, (f) happiness of childhood relationship with parents, (g) maternal employment, (h) the prevailing authority pattern in the family of orientation, (i) socioeconomic status and (j) marital status

of respondent's parents.

(3) To relate FPM Scale scores to each of the following perceptions: (a) the most important factor in achieving marital success, (b) the major problem involved in marriage, (c) source of greatest influence upon formation of attitudes toward marriage, (d) the degree to which a present marriage would be successful, (e) exposure to a previous family relations course, and (f) the perceived preparation for marriage at the present time.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Most of the literature dealing with attitudes and perceptions concerning marriage has focused upon attitudes concerning mixed marriages and marriage role expectations. There has been very little research dealing with favorableness of perception concerning marriage in general. Included in the review of literature are the following: (a) general attitudes and perceptions concerning marriage, (b) marriage role expectations, (c) attitudes and perceptions concerning desired age of future mate, (d) attitudes and perceptions concerning the preferred time to marry, and (e) attitudes and perceptions concerning interfaith and interracial marriages.

#### General Attitudes and Perceptions Concerning Marriage

A projective study involving 40 unmarried college youth revealed inconsistent attitudes toward marriage (Sewell, Bowen, Lieberman, 1966). The subjects were asked to select those people they believed to be married from photographs of twelve men and twelve women who had been rated as "plain" or "good looking" by the researchers. "Each sex chose as being married those of their own sex who were 'plain' and those of the opposite sex who were 'good looking'" (Sewell, Bowen, Lieberman, 1966 p. 418).

Christopherson (1960) in examining college marriages found that many college couples felt that marriage had been a great stabilizing factor in their lives.

Brenton (1966) suggests that men tend to feel marriage is of much greater benefit to women than to men. Wallin (1954) found that males tended to have less favorable attitudes toward marriage than did females as the perceptions of the parents' marriage declined from happy to unhappy. He suggested that the more positive attitudes of females toward marriage may be due to the fact that marriage represents such a major part of the female's future. Similarly, a study by Williamson (1965) indicated that females appeared to be more anxious to marry than males. Perhaps this finding may be related to the fact that marriage seems to be emphasized in the process of socialization for women more than for men (White, 1955).

In a recent investigation of college students' attitudes toward marriage, Stinnett (1971) found that the greatest proportion of the students indicated that effective communication was: (a) the most important characteristic of a successful marriage, (b) the major problem in marriage, and (c) the area of marriage about which they most desired information. Stinnett also found that love was most often mentioned as the primary purpose of marriage which coincides with Burgess and Wallin's (1953) report that engaged men and women also rate love as the most important reason for marriage.

#### Marriage Role Expectations

Various studies have been conducted concerning the marriage role expectations of youth. The results of these studies converge in

indicating an increasing tendency of youth to see marriage roles in an equalitarian manner with emphasis on mutually sharing decision making and expressive roles. Men have been found to expect more rigid sex role identification in marriage than do women. Also, persons in the lower socioeconomic classes have been found to expect more rigid sex role identification in marriage than do middle class persons (Dunn, 1960; Lovejoy, 1961; Motz, 1950).

Dunn (1960) found in her study that a majority of the girls viewed housekeeping as their major responsibility in marriage and a majority of the boys saw their major responsibility in marriage as that of the wage earner.

#### Attitudes and Perceptions Concerning

##### Desired Age of Future Mate

Most young people are concerned about the relationship of their age and that of their marriage partners. Men wish a mate younger and women a mate older than themselves (Hill, 1945). They are particularly concerned if the bride is slightly older than the groom probably because of the popular belief that the husband should be slightly older (Rockwood and Ford, 1945). This attitude is reflected in the fact that the American husband is usually two to three years older than the wife (Womble, 1966). This age difference may be related to the fact that girls mature earlier than boys and wish to marry sooner than do the boys (Landis, 1970).

In a study by Rockwood and Ford (1945), it was found that none of the men and only four percent of the women preferred to marry a person five years their junior or senior. Womble (1966) has noted that a few

years difference in age usually does not make for marital difficulties, but 10 to 15 years age difference in marriage partners does seem to contribute to marital problems.

#### Attitudes and Perceptions Concerning the Preferred Time to Marry

College students' attitudes concerning age at marriage are reflected in recent surveys. The National Gilbert Youth Poll (1970) found that 53 percent of the young adults in the sample indicated they were not in favor of young marriages. Opposition to early marriage increased as age of the respondents increased indicating that college students held less favorable attitudes toward early marriage than younger respondents. Some of the reasons given for being against early marriage were: (a) immaturity of the partners, (b) lack of financial preparation, and (c) limiting of educational opportunities. In a study done by Landis (1969), college students examined some of their impressions of high school marriages. The common theme of their opinions was that they had no concept of what marriage involved when they were in high school and that most high school marriages are not successful.

A study of college freshmen by Neubeck and Hewer (1965) revealed that a majority of students preferred not to marry while in college, but rather they preferred to marry one to two years after graduation.

#### Attitudes and Perceptions Concerning Interfaith and Interracial Marriages

##### Interfaith Marriages

The attitudes of youth are becoming increasingly more accepting of

interfaith marriage (Thomas, 1951). A study by Gordon (1964) revealed that of 5,407 college students surveyed in 40 colleges and universities, 37 percent of non-Jews stated that they would be willing to marry Jews and 56 percent of non-Catholics stated they would be willing to marry Catholics. Of the total sample, 50 percent did not favor marriage to a person of another religion. In other studies, college and high school students' attitudes toward interfaith marriage expressed the following trends: (a) cross-religious dating and marriage vary according to the level of religiosity, with those who attend church regularly being the least likely to date across religious lines; (b) cross-religious dating and marriage are directly related to social class, with higher status persons having stronger negative attitudes toward cross-religious dating and marriage than lower status persons; (c) females are less likely to have favorable attitudes toward cross-religious dating than males because they tend to view dating as leading to marriage more often than males; and (d) college students have less favorable attitudes toward cross-religious dating than do high school students because dating is more likely to be marriage oriented for the older student (Burchinal, 1960; National Gilbert Youth Poll, 1970).

### Interracial Marriages

Although racially mixed marriages include any marriage uniting two people of different races, the least acceptable form of interracial marriage in the United States appears to be the Negro and White marriage. In the National Gilbert Youth Poll (1970), it was revealed that youth's reactions to Negro and White interracial marriage were more sensitive than their reactions to interfaith marriages. One-half of



the 5,000 students surveyed were against interracial marriage among Negroes and Whites (National Gilbert Youth Poll, 1970). The areas of the country showing the strongest opposition were the southern and north central regions. In a study by Gordon (1964) it appears that a majority (91%) of the students in his study do not favor marriage to a person of another race. Only six percent of the respondents indicated it would be easy for them to marry a person of another race.

Landis (1970) suggests that college campuses are becoming more accepting of interracial marriages and that the restraints against white girls dating men of other races, especially men from other countries, are breaking down.

## CHAPTER III

### PROCEDURE

#### Selection of Subjects

The subjects for this study were Oklahoma State University students who were enrolled in the undergraduate marriage course, Family Relations and Child Development 3142 during the fall semester, 1968. The marriage course, offered by the Department of Family Relations and Child Development is composed of undergraduate students which represent the various colleges of the University. A total sample of 401 students was obtained by means of a self-administered questionnaire. The students were single, primarily Protestant, and the majority were between the ages of 20 and 21.

#### Instrument

The questionnaire used in this study included the Favorableness of Perception concerning Marriage Scale. Additional items were included in the instrument to obtain certain background data from the students such as sex, age, religious preference, sibling position, residence, happiness of childhood relationship with parents, maternal employment, the prevailing authority pattern in the family of orientation, socioeconomic status, and marital status of respondents' parents.

Socioeconomic status of the subjects was measured by the McGuire-White Index of Social Status (1955) which uses occupation, source of

income, and education as indicators of social status.

#### FPM Scale

The Favorableness of Perceptions concerning Marriage Scale, hereafter referred to as the FPM Scale, was used to measure college students' favorableness of perception concerning marriage. Each of the twenty items in this Likert-type scale is characterized by five degrees of response: (a) strongly agree, (b) agree, (c) neutral, (d) disagree, and (e) strongly disagree. The answers are scored so that the most favorable response is given the highest score and the least favorable, the lowest score. The statements are arranged in alternating positive and negative sequence. The 20 items represent favorableness of perception concerning marriage with respect to: (a) fulfillment within marriage of the needs for happiness, love, appreciation, respect, and communication; (b) individual growth and development in marriage; (c) problems and difficulties in marriage; (d) interest and excitement in marriage; and (e) desire to maintain married life.

#### Analysis of Data

A percentage and frequency count was used to analyze various background characteristics of the subjects.

The chi-square test was used in an item analysis of the FPM Scale in order to determine those items which significantly differentiated those respondents whose total scores fell in the upper and lower quartiles. A split-half reliability coefficient was used to determine reliability of the FPM Scale.

The analysis of variance was used to examine the following null hypotheses:

1. There are no significant differences in the FPM scores of respondents classified according to: (a) sex, (b) age, (c) religious preference, (d) sibling position, (e) residence for the major part of the respondent's life, (f) happiness of childhood relationship with parents, (g) maternal employment, (h) the prevailing authority pattern in the family of orientation, (i) socioeconomic status, and (j) marital status of respondent's parents.
2. There are no significant differences in the FPM scores of respondents classified according to: (a) the perception of the most important factor in achieving marital success, (b) the perception of the major problem involved in marriage, (c) the perception of the source of greatest influence upon formation of attitudes toward marriage, (d) the perception of the degree to which a present marriage would be successful, (e) exposure to a previous family relations course, and (f) the perceived preparation for marriage at the present time.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

#### Description of Subjects

Table I presents a detailed description of the subjects who participated in this study. The sample consisted of 401 students who were enrolled in the undergraduate marriage course, Family Relations and Child Development 3142 during the fall semester, 1968. There were 142 males and 259 females.

The respondents ranged in age from 17 to 24 and over. The majority of the respondents were in the 20 to 21 age group (51.75%) with the smallest proportion (2.00%) in the 24 and over age group.

The respondents were predominantly Protestant (86.47%) while 9.02 percent were Catholic. Respondents listing "other" as their religious preference comprised 4.51 percent of the total.

The largest proportion of the respondents (34.84%) listed a city over 50,000 as the place of residence for the major portion of life. The smallest proportion (15.79%) reported having lived on a farm or in the country for the major part of life. Over 43 percent reported being the oldest child in the family and 30.41 percent indicated they were the youngest child in the family. Results indicate that 85.75 percent of the parents were living together at the time of the study.

Most of the subjects were in the lower middle class (43.14%) and upper middle class (34.16%) as determined by the McGuire-White Index of

TABLE I  
CHARACTERISTICS OF SUBJECTS

Variable	Classification	No.	%
Sex	Male	142	35.41
	Female	259	64.59
Age	17-19	147	36.75
	20-21	207	51.75
	22-23	38	9.50
	24-over	8	2.00
Religious Preference	Catholic	36	9.02
	Protestant	345	86.47
	Other	18	4.51
Sibling Position	Oldest	157	43.01
	Intermediate	97	26.58
	Youngest	111	30.41
Residence for Major Part of Life	On farm or in country	63	15.79
	Small town under 25,000	106	26.57
	City of 25,000-50,000	91	22.81
	City over 50,000	139	34.84
Maternal Employment	Yes	119	29.68
	No	282	70.32
Socioeconomic Status	Upper	12	2.99
	Upper-middle	137	34.16
	Lower-middle	173	43.14
	Upper-lower	71	17.71
	Lower-lower	8	2.00
Parents' Marital Status	Living together	343	85.75
	Separated or divorced (no remarriage)	12	3.00
	One parent deceased (with no remarriage)	25	6.25
	Divorced (with remarriage)	14	3.50
	One of parents deceased (with remarriage)	6	1.50

Social Status (1955).

### The Item Analysis

The chi-square test was employed in obtaining an index of the validity of the items in the Favorableness of Perception concerning Marriage Scale in order to determine if each item significantly differentiated between those subjects scoring in the upper quartile and those scoring in the lower quartile on the basis of the total scale scores. All of the twenty items in the FPM Scale were found to be significantly discriminating at the .001 level as indicated by Table II.

TABLE II  
ITEM ANALYSIS BASED ON COMPARISONS OF THE UPPER AND LOWER  
QUARTILES OF TOTAL FPM SCALE SCORES

Item	df	$\chi^2$	Level of Sig.
1. I feel that marriage brings happiness to most people.	4	42.41	.001
2. I feel that marriage involves many difficult problems.	4	19.37	.001
3. I do not feel that it is very difficult to achieve a successful marriage.	4	24.44	.001
4. I feel that marriage usually prevents an individual from achieving his or her potential as a person.	4	90.32	.001

TABLE II (Continued)

Item	df	$\chi^2$	Level of Sig.
5. I feel that marriage usually fulfills a person's need for appreciation.	4	54.69	.001
6. I feel that marriage usually results in husbands and wives becoming less interesting persons.	4	107.76	.001
7. I feel that marriage usually fulfills a person's need for love.	4	74.80	.001
8. I feel that there is little excitement and adventure in marriage.	4	122.68	.001
9. I do not feel that marriage usually results in husbands and wives losing their individuality.	4	89.56	.001
10. I feel that marriage tends to decrease a couple's respect for each other.	4	103.10	.001
11. I feel that marriage offers one of the best opportunities available for positive personal development.	4	66.80	.001
12. I feel that marriage usually results in husbands and wives taking each other too much for granted.	4	76.41	.001
13. I feel that marriage encourages love to grow and become even more meaningful.	4	148.23	.001
14. I feel that marriage demands too much from an individual.	4	62.20	.001



TABLE II (Continued)

Item	df	$\chi^2$	Level of Sig.
15. I feel that marriage offers a great opportunity for intimate meaningful communication with another person.	4	78.80	.001
16. I feel that marriage is more likely to create hostility between husbands and wives rather than happiness.	4	101.02	.001
17. I feel that marriage encourages the development of a greater understanding of the needs of others.	4	76.08	.001
18. I feel that marriage is usually disappointing with respect to the husband and wife continuing to love each other.	4	114.87	.001
19. I feel that most husbands and wives do not desire to be single again.	4	54.17	.001
20. About the best one can hope for in marriage is to keep conflict to a minimum and try to agree on as many things as possible.	4	41.98	.001

A split-half reliability coefficient, computed with the Spearman-Brown Correction Formula, of +0.99 was obtained in determining an index of the reliability of the items in the FPM Scale.

### Examination of Major Hypotheses

Hypothesis I(a). There are no significant differences in FPM scores of respondents classified according to sex. This hypothesis was examined by using the one-way classification analysis of variance. As Table III indicates, an F score of 19.55 was obtained, showing that a significant difference existed at the .001 level with females receiving a higher mean FPM score than males, indicating a more favorable perception concerning marriage. This concurs with a study by Wallin (1954), who found that males' favorable attitudes toward marriage declined more than did the females' attitudes as the perceptions of parents' marriages declined from happy to unhappy. Wallin (1954) suggested that the more positive attitudes of females toward marriage may be due to the fact that marriage represents such a major part of the female's future. The present results may also be associated with a study by Neubeck and Hower (1965) who reported that the college freshmen in their study had given little thought as to when they would be married, but that men had given it less thought than women. Similarly, a study by Williamson (1965) indicated that females appeared to be more anxious to marry than males.

This present finding that females indicated a more favorable perception concerning marriage than did the males may be because marriage is emphasized in the process of socialization for women more than for men and also because American society seems to emphasize the benefits and satisfactions of marriage for the females more than for the males (White, 1955; Williamson, 1965). As Brenton (1966) has suggested, when a man feels that marriage is of much greater benefit to women than to

men there is a tendency for him to have more ambiguous and negative attitudes toward marriage than do women.

TABLE III  
F SCORE REFLECTING DIFFERENCES IN FPM SCORES  
CLASSIFIED ACCORDING TO SEX

Description	No.	$\bar{X}$	F	Level of Sig.
<u>Sex</u>				
Male	142	75.28	19.55	.001
Female	259	79.14		

Women may also view marriage more favorably than men because of the stigma our society places on the unmarried female. She is considered a spinster or "old maid," whereas the unmarried male is considered an eligible bachelor regardless of his age. As Brenton (1966) has suggested, this point of view may cause the male to view marriage as a trap, and he as the victim.

Hypothesis I(b). There is no significant difference in FPM scores of respondents classified according to age. Table IV indicates that an F score of 2.37 was obtained when the one-way classification analysis of variance was used, indicating no significant difference existed in FPM scores according to age. The mean scores of the five age groups varied only slightly which suggests that within this group, age was not

a significant factor influencing perceptions concerning marriage. However, a study by Williamson (1965) revealed that goals sought in marriage may vary according to age.

TABLE IV  
F SCORE REFLECTING DIFFERENCES IN FPM SCORES  
CLASSIFIED ACCORDING TO AGE

Description	No.	$\bar{X}$	F	Level of Sig.
<u>Age</u>				
17-19	147	77.79	2.37	n.s.
20-21	207	78.39		
22-23	38	74.39		
24-over	8	78.38		

Hypothesis I(c). There is no significant difference in FPM scores of respondents classified according to religious preference. As shown in Table V, an F score of .91 was obtained when the one-way classification analysis of variance was used. This shows there was no significant difference in FPM scores of respondents classified according to religious preference. The mean scores of the three groups vary only slightly which indicates that in this study religious preference was not a significant factor in influencing perceptions concerning marriage.

TABLE V  
F SCORE REFLECTING DIFFERENCES IN FPM SCORES CLASSIFIED  
ACCORDING TO RELIGIOUS PREFERENCE

Description	No.	$\bar{X}$	F	Level of Sig.
<u>Religious Preference</u>				
Catholic	36	76.72		
Protestant	345	77.94	.91	n.s.
Other	18	75.61		

Hypothesis I(d). There is no significant difference in FPM scores of respondents classified according to sibling position. In order to examine this hypothesis, the one-way classification analysis of variance was applied. An F score of 1.91 was obtained indicating there was not a significant difference in FPM scores of respondents classified according to sibling position. The mean scores vary only slightly. However, examination of Table VI shows that those who indicated they were the intermediate child in the family had a higher mean FPM score than did the respondents who indicated they were the youngest child or the oldest child.

TABLE VI  
F SCORE REFLECTING DIFFERENCES IN FPM SCORES  
CLASSIFIED ACCORDING TO SIBLING POSITION

Description	No.	$\bar{X}$	F	Level of Sig.
<u>Sibling Position</u>				
Oldest	157	76.85		
Intermediate	97	78.85	1.91	n.s.
Youngest	111	78.32		

Hypothesis I(e). There is no significant difference in FPM scores of respondents classified according to residence for the major portion of respondent's life. An examination of this hypothesis, utilizing the one-way classification analysis of variance, indicates that the obtained F score of 0.51 was not significant. Table VII shows that mean scores of the four groups are very similar. These results suggest that residence for the major portion of the respondent's life does not influence the respondent's perceptions concerning marriage.

TABLE VII

F SCORE REFLECTING DIFFERENCES IN FPM SCORES CLASSIFIED ACCORDING  
TO RESIDENCE FOR MAJOR PORTION OF RESPONDENT'S LIFE

Description	No.	$\bar{X}$	F	Level of Sig.
<u>Residence for Major Part of Life</u>				
On farm or in country	63	77.75		
Small town under 25,000	106	77.27		
City 25,000-50,000	91	77.51	0.51	n.s.
City over 50,000	139	78.53		

Hypothesis I(f). There is no significant difference in FPM scores of respondents classified according to happiness of childhood relationships with parents. When this hypothesis was subjected to the one-way classification analysis of variance, a significant difference was found to exist at the .001 level. Table VIII shows that an F score of 16.58 was obtained. Those respondents who indicated a happy childhood relationship with their parents reflected significantly more favorable perceptions concerning marriage than those who reported they were uncertain about the happiness of the childhood relationships with their parents. This finding indicates that happiness of childhood relationships with parents may influence the respondent's perceptions concerning marriage and coincides with various other research studies indicating that a happy relationship with parents during childhood is one of

the most important factors associated with positive marital adjustment (Kirkpatrick, 1963).

TABLE VIII

F SCORE REFLECTING DIFFERENCES IN FPM SCORES CLASSIFIED ACCORDING TO HAPPINESS OF CHILDHOOD RELATIONSHIPS WITH PARENTS

Description	No.	$\bar{X}$	F	Level of Sig.
<u>Happiness of Childhood Relationship With Parents</u>				
Happy	351	78.49	16.58	.001
Uncertain	48	73.29		

Hypothesis I(g). There is no significant difference in FPM scores of respondents classified according to maternal employment. No significant difference was found when the one-way classification analysis of variance was utilized to determine if there was a difference in FPM scores of respondents classified according to maternal employment. The F score was 1.33. The mean scores were very similar as shown in Table IX with those respondents whose mothers were not employed showing a slightly higher mean FPM score than those respondents who had working mothers.



TABLE IX

F SCORE REFLECTING DIFFERENCES IN FPM SCORES CLASSIFIED  
ACCORDING TO MATERNAL EMPLOYMENT

Description	No.	$\bar{X}$	F	Level of Sig.
<u>Maternal Employment</u>				
Yes	119	77.02	1.33	n.s.
No	282	78.10		

Hypothesis I(h). There is no significant difference in FPM scores of respondents classified according to the prevailing authority pattern in the family of orientation. Table X indicates there is no significant difference in FPM scores of respondents classified according to the prevailing authority pattern in the family of orientation. The F score was 2.60. Examination of the table reveals that the respondents who reported a democratic authority pattern in their family of orientation showed a slightly higher mean FPM score than did those who reported a strict or permissive authority pattern.

TABLE X

F SCORE REFLECTING DIFFERENCES IN FPM SCORES CLASSIFIED ACCORDING TO  
THE PREVAILING AUTHORITY PATTERN IN THE FAMILY OF ORIENTATION

Description	No.	$\bar{X}$	F	Level of Sig.
<u>Prevailing Authority Pattern in the Family of Orientation</u>				
Strict	90	78.19		
Democratic	226	78.30	2.60	n.s.
Permissive	82	75.85		

Hypothesis I(i). There is no significant difference in FPM scores  
of respondents classified according to socioeconomic status. The utili-  
zation of the one-way classification analysis of variance to examine  
this hypothesis revealed that there was no significant difference in  
FPM scores according to socioeconomic status. Table XI shows an F  
score of 0.56.

TABLE XI

F SCORE REFLECTING DIFFERENCES IN FPM SCORES CLASSIFIED  
ACCORDING TO SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS

Description	No.	$\bar{X}$	F	Level of Sig.
<u>Socioeconomic Status</u>				
Upper	12	79.58		
Upper-middle	137	77.50		
Lower-middle	173	77.93	0.56	n.s.
Upper-lower	71	78.03		
Lower-lower	8	74.13		

Hypothesis I(j). There is no significant difference in FPM scores of respondents classified according to marital status of respondent's parents. In order to determine if a significant difference existed according to the parent's marital status, the one-way classification analysis of variance was applied. The F score of 1.07 indicates there is no significant difference in FPM scores of respondents classified according to the parent's marital status as shown in Table XII. It is interesting to note, however, that the respondents who received the least favorable mean FPM score had parents who were separated or divorced with no remarriage.

TABLE XII

F SCORE REFLECTING DIFFERENCES IN FPM SCORES CLASSIFIED  
ACCORDING TO MARITAL STATUS OF RESPONDENT'S PARENTS

Description	No.	$\bar{X}$	F	Level of Sig.
<u>Marital Status of Respondent's Parents</u>				
Living together	343	78.04		
Separated or divorced (no remarriage)	12	74.33		
One parent deceased (no remarriage)	25	77.48	1.07	n.s.
Divorced (with re- marriage)	14	75.07		
One of parents deceased (with remarriage)	6	75.17		

Hypothesis II(a). There is no significant difference in FPM  
scores of respondents classified according to the perception of the  
most important factor in achieving marital success. Table XIII shows  
that an F score of 3.57 was obtained when the one-way classification  
analysis of variance was used to examine this hypothesis. This shows  
there is a significant difference in FPM scores at the .05 level ac-  
cording to perception of the most important factor in achieving marital  
success. Those who perceived determination to make the marriage suc-  
ceed as being the most important factor in achieving marital success  
received the most favorable mean FPM score. This finding may be re-  
lated to the suggestion by Adams (1951) that the greatest single factor

promoting marital success is the mutual determination of the couple to make the marriage work. This finding is particularly interesting in that determination is often an ignored concept in marriage and family living literature.

TABLE XIII

F SCORE REFLECTING DIFFERENCES IN FPM SCORES CLASSIFIED  
ACCORDING TO THE PERCEPTION OF THE MOST IMPORTANT  
FACTOR IN ACHIEVING MARITAL SUCCESS

Description	No.	$\bar{X}$	F	Level of Sig.
<u>Perception of the Most Important Factor in Achieving Marital Success</u>				
Being in love	99	78.59		
Determined to make the marriage succeed	129	78.90	3.57	.05
Having common interests	20	73.70		
Compatibility of personalities	146	77.14		

Hypothesis II(b). There is no significant difference in FPM scores of respondents classified according to the perception of the major problem involved in marriage. This hypothesis was examined using the one-way classification analysis of variance. Table XIV indicates that the obtained F score of 1.74 was not significant. This result

suggests that perception of the major problem in marriage is not related to favorableness of perception concerning marriage.

TABLE XIV  
F SCORE REFLECTING DIFFERENCES IN FPM SCORES CLASSIFIED  
ACCORDING TO THE PERCEPTION OF THE MAJOR  
PROBLEM INVOLVED IN MARRIAGE

Description	No.	$\bar{X}$	F	Level of Sig.
<u>Perception of the Major Problem Involved in Marriage</u>				
In-laws	16	78.56		
Money	117	77.73		
Lack of appreciation	76	78.47		
Sexual adjustment	22	77.14	1.74	n.s.
Children	5	69.60		
Effectively expressing feelings to each other	151	78.67		

Hypothesis II(c). There is no significant difference in FPM scores of respondents classified according to the perception of the source of greatest influence upon formation of attitudes toward marriage. The application of the one-way classification analysis of variance to examine this hypothesis revealed there was a significant

difference in FPM scores of respondents classified according to the perception of the source of greatest influence upon the formation of attitudes toward marriage. Table XV shows an F score of 4.82 which is significant at the .01 level. Those respondents who perceived the church as being the source of greatest influence upon the formation of their attitudes toward marriage received the most favorable mean FPM score. This finding would appear to be related to research reports that families which are religiously active, using church attendance as an indication of religious activity, have a lower divorce rate than non-religious families (Blood, 1969). In a study by Locke (1951) it was found there was significantly less divorce, both in the first and later half of marriage, among couples who attended church regularly. Burgess and Cottrell (1939) also found that Sunday School and church attendance before marriage is positively associated with marriage success. The present results would also seem to be associated with research findings that church attendance is closely related to marital satisfaction for both husbands and wives (Burchinal, 1957; Chesser, 1957).

The present results may be partially explained by the fact that the church is an institution devoted to the promotion of strong marriage and families as well as to the promotion of love, particularly the promotion of love in marriage and the family (Blood, 1969).

TABLE XV  
F SCORE REFLECTING DIFFERENCES IN FPM SCORES CLASSIFIED  
ACCORDING TO THE PERCEPTION OF THE SOURCE OF  
GREATEST INFLUENCE UPON FORMATION OF  
ATTITUDES TOWARD MARRIAGE

Description	No.	$\bar{X}$	F	Level of Sig.
<u>Perception of the Source of Greatest Influence Upon Formation of Attitudes Toward Marriage</u>				
Parents	271	78.67	4.82	.01
Peers	77	75.32		
School	16	74.38		
Church	25	80.04		

Hypothesis II(d). There is no significant difference in FPM scores of respondents classified according to the perception of the degree to which a present marriage would be successful. As shown in Table XVI a significant difference in FPM scores does exist according to the perception of the degree to which a present marriage would be successful. An F score of 12.57 indicates that the difference is significant at the .001 level. Those respondents who believed a present marriage would be very successful showed the highest mean FPM score. Those who perceived a present marriage as very unsuccessful received the least favorable mean FPM score. These results are related to the results reported in Hypothesis II(f) in which it was found that individuals who perceive being very prepared for marriage have the most



favorable mean FPM score.

TABLE XVI

F SCORE REFLECTING DIFFERENCES IN FPM SCORES CLASSIFIED  
ACCORDING TO THE PERCEPTION OF THE DEGREE TO WHICH  
A PRESENT MARRIAGE WOULD BE SUCCESSFUL

Description	No.	$\bar{X}$	F	Level of Sig.
<u>Perception of the Degree to Which a Present Marriage Would Be Successful</u>				
Very successful	91	82.15		
Successful	175	77.86		
Uncertain	107	75.56	12.57	.001
Unsuccessful	16	71.56		
Very unsuccessful	6	69.83		

Hypothesis II(e). There is no significant difference in FPM scores of respondents classified according to exposure to a previous family relations course. The one-way classification analysis of variance was utilized to examine this hypothesis. An F score of 3.90 was obtained indicating a significant difference does exist at the .05 level in FPM scores of respondents classified according to exposure to a previous family relations course. As Table XVII shows, those respondents who indicated that they had been exposed to a previous family

relations course received the most favorable mean FPM score. This finding relates to other research studies indicating that unmarried students' attitudes toward marriage and family living shift positively as the result of a family relations course (Duvall, 1965; Moses, 1956; Olson and Gravatt, 1968; Womble, 1955).

TABLE XVII

F SCORE REFLECTING DIFFERENCES IN FPM SCORES CLASSIFIED  
ACCORDING TO EXPOSURE TO A PREVIOUS  
FAMILY RELATIONS COURSE

Description	No.	$\bar{X}$	F	Level of Sig.
<u>Exposure to a Previous Family Relations Course</u>				
Yes	129	79.02	3.90	.05
No	269	77.21		

Hypothesis II(f). There is no significant difference in FPM scores of respondents classified according to the perceived preparation for marriage at the present time. In order to determine if a significant difference existed according to the perceived preparation for marriage at the present time, the one-way classification analysis of variance was applied. Table XVIII shows that the obtained F score of 9.76 was significant at the .001 level according to the perceived preparation for marriage at the present time. As the perceived preparation

for marriage increased, there was a progressive increase in the favorableness of perception concerning marriage. Those respondents who perceived being very prepared for marriage at the present time received the most favorable mean FPM score. Those respondents who perceived being very unprepared for marriage at the present time received the least favorable mean FPM score. This finding is closely associated with Hypothesis II(d) in which it was found that those who perceived a present marriage as being very successful received the highest mean FPM score.

TABLE XVIII

F SCORE REFLECTING DIFFERENCES IN FPM SCORES CLASSIFIED  
ACCORDING TO THE PERCEIVED PREPARATION FOR  
MARRIAGE AT THE PRESENT TIME

Description	No.	$\bar{X}$	F	Level of Sig.
<u>Perceived Preparation</u> <u>for Marriage at the</u> <u>Present Time</u>				
Very prepared	40	80.13		
Prepared	144	80.08		
Uncertain	137	76.61	9.76	.001
Unprepared	59	75.85		
Very unprepared	17	62.24		

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY

The overall purpose of this study was to determine the favorableness of college students' perception concerning marriage.

The sample was composed of 401 Oklahoma State University students who were enrolled in the undergraduate marriage course, Family Relations and Child Development 3142 during the fall semester, 1968. The subjects were single, primarily Protestant, and between the ages of 17 and 24.

The instrument used in this study was developed for the purpose of investigating college students' perceptions concerning marriage. The questionnaire included the following: (a) items to obtain certain background data and (b) the Favorableness of Perceptions concerning Marriage (FPM) Scale.

A percentage and frequency count was used to analyze the various background characteristics of the respondents.

The chi-square test was used in an item analysis of the Favorableness of Perception concerning Marriage Scale to determine those items that significantly differentiated between those subjects scoring in the upper and lower quartile groups. The split half method was used to measure the reliability of the twenty items in the scale.

The one-way classification analysis of variance was used to determine if a significant difference existed in FPM Scale scores of

respondents classified according to: (a) sex, (b) age, (c) religious preference, (d) sibling position, (e) residence for major portion of respondent's life, (f) happiness of childhood relationships with parents, (g) maternal employment, (h) prevailing authority pattern in the family of orientation, (i) socioeconomic status, and (j) marital status of respondent's parents. The one-way classification analysis of variance was also used to determine if a significant difference existed in FPM Scale scores of respondents classified according to: (a) the perception of the most important factor in achieving marital success, (b) the perception of the major problem involved in marriage, (c) the perception of the source of greatest influence upon formation of attitudes toward marriage, (d) the perception of the degree to which a present marriage would be successful, (e) exposure to a previous family relations course, and (f) the perceived preparation for marriage at the present time.

The results of the study were as follows:

1. All twenty items in the FPM Scale were significantly discriminating between the upper quartile and lower quartile groups at the .001 level. A split half reliability coefficient computed with the Spearman-Brown Correction Formula of +0.99 was obtained.
2. A significant difference was found to exist at the .001 level in FPM scores of respondents classified according to sex of the respondents. Females received a more favorable mean FPM score than males.
3. A significant difference was found to exist at the .001 level in FPM scores of respondents classified according to the

happiness of childhood relationships with parents. Those respondents who rated their childhood relationships with parents as happy received a higher mean FPM score than those respondents who felt uncertain about their childhood relationships with parents.

4. A significant difference was found to exist at the .01 level in FPM scores of respondents classified according to perception of the source of greatest influence upon formation of attitudes toward marriage. Those respondents who perceived the church as the greatest influence upon the formation of their attitudes toward marriage received the highest mean FPM score.
5. There was a significant difference at the .001 level in FPM scores of respondents classified according to perception of the degree to which a present marriage would be successful. Those who felt a present marriage would be very successful had the most favorable mean FPM score.
6. A significant difference was found to exist at the .001 level in FPM scores of respondents classified according to the perceived preparation for marriage at the present time. Those who felt very prepared for marriage at the present time received the most favorable mean FPM score.
7. There was a significant difference at the .05 level in FPM scores of respondents classified according to perception of the most important factor in achieving marital success. Those who perceived determination in marriage as the most important factor in achieving marital success received the most

favorable mean FPM score.

8. A significant difference was found to exist at the .05 level in FPM scores of respondents classified according to exposure to a previous family relations course. Those who felt a previous family relations course was beneficial received the highest mean FPM score.

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## APPENDIX

Oklahoma State University  
Division of Home Economics

Department of Family Relations and  
Child Development FRCD 3142

### GENERAL INFORMATION

Please check or fill in answers as appropriate to each question. The blanks at the extreme left of the page are for purpose of coding (do not fill in). Begin with item 4.

- \_\_\_1-3. \_\_\_\_\_(do not fill in)
- \_\_\_4. Sex: \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_5. Age: \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_6. Religious preference:
- \_\_\_\_\_1. Catholic
- \_\_\_\_\_2. Protestant
- \_\_\_\_\_3. Other
- \_\_\_7. If you have brothers and sisters, are you the: (if only child, leave this blank)
- \_\_\_\_\_1. Oldest
- \_\_\_\_\_2. Intermediate
- \_\_\_\_\_3. Youngest
- \_\_\_8. For the major part of your life have you lived:
- \_\_\_1. On a farm or in country
- \_\_\_2. Small town under 25,000
- \_\_\_3. City of 25,000 to 50,000 population
- \_\_\_4. City of over 50,000 population
- \_\_\_9. How would you appraise the childhood relationship with your parents?
- \_\_\_1. happy \_\_\_2. uncertain
- \_\_\_10. Was your mother employed a major part of the time when you were growing up?
- \_\_\_1. yes \_\_\_2. no

\_\_\_11. What was the prevailing type of authority used in your family?

\_\_\_1. strict \_\_\_2. Democratic \_\_\_3. permissive

\_\_\_12. Who is the main source of income in your family?

\_\_\_1. Father \_\_\_2. Mother \_\_\_3. Other (specify)

\_\_\_13. What is the primary source of the above income?

\_\_\_1. Inherited savings and investments  
\_\_\_2. Earned wealth, transferable investments  
\_\_\_3. Profits, royalties, fees  
\_\_\_4. Salary, commissions (regular, monthly or yearly)  
\_\_\_5. Hourly wages, weekly checks  
\_\_\_6. Odd jobs, seasonal work, private charity  
\_\_\_7. Public relief or charity

\_\_\_14. What is the occupation of the principal earner of the above income?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_15. What is the highest educational attainment of the principal earner of the above income?

\_\_\_7. Less than grade 8  
\_\_\_6. Completed grade 8, but did not attend beyond 9  
\_\_\_5. Attended high school, completed grade 9, but did not graduate  
\_\_\_4. Graduate from high school  
\_\_\_3. Attended college or university for two or more years  
\_\_\_2. Graduated from 4-year college  
\_\_\_1. Completed graduate work for profession

\_\_\_16. (Omit)

\_\_\_17. What is your parents' marital status?

\_\_\_1. Living together  
\_\_\_2. Separated or divorced (with no remarriage)  
\_\_\_3. One of the parents deceased (with no remarriage)  
\_\_\_4. Divorced (with remarriage)  
\_\_\_5. One of parents deceased (with remarriage)

## PERCEPTION SCALE

The purpose of the following questions is to determine your general perception concerning marriage. Please answer according to your own true feelings and not according to how you think you "ought" to answer. There are no right or wrong answers. Please be as frank as possible in your answers.

For each item below indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree by circling the response which best describes your feelings.

The response code is as follows: SA - strongly agree; A - agree; N - neutral; D - disagree; SD - strongly disagree.

- \_\_\_18. SA A N D SD I feel that marriage brings happiness to most people.
- \_\_\_19. SA A N D SD I feel that marriage involves many difficult problems.
- \_\_\_20. SA A N D SD I do not feel that it is very difficult to achieve a successful marriage.
- \_\_\_21. SA A N D SD I feel that marriage usually prevents an individual from achieving his or her potential as a person.
- \_\_\_22. SA A N D SD I feel that marriage usually fulfills a person's need for appreciation.
- \_\_\_23. SA A N D SD I feel that marriage usually results in husbands and wives becoming less interesting persons.
- \_\_\_24. SA A N D SD I feel that marriage usually fulfills a person's need for love.
- \_\_\_25. SA A N D SD I feel that there is little excitement and adventure in marriage.
- \_\_\_26. SA A N D SD I do not feel that marriage usually results in husbands and wives losing their individuality.
- \_\_\_27. SA A N D SD I feel that marriage tends to decrease a couple's respect for each other.
- \_\_\_28. SA A N D SD I feel that marriage offers one of the best opportunities available for positive personal development.

- \_\_\_29. SA A N D SD I feel that marriage usually results in husbands and wives taking each other too much for granted.
- \_\_\_30. SA A N D SD I feel that marriage encourages love to grow and become even more meaningful.
- \_\_\_31. SA A N D SD I feel that marriage demands too much from an individual.
- \_\_\_32. SA A N D SD I feel that marriage offers a great opportunity for intimate, meaningful communication with another person.
- \_\_\_33. SA A N D SD I feel that marriage is more likely to create hostility between husbands and wives rather than happiness.
- \_\_\_34. SA A N D SD I feel that marriage encourages the development of a greater understanding of the needs of others.
- \_\_\_35. SA A N D SD I feel that marriage is usually disappointing with respect to the husband and wife continuing to love each other.
- \_\_\_36. SA A N D SD I feel that most husbands and wives do not desire to be single again.
- \_\_\_37. SA A N D SD About the best one can hope for in marriage is to keep conflict to a minimum and try to agree on as many things as possible.

Please check the response which most nearly describes your feeling.

- \_\_\_38. Which of the following characteristics do you most want your future mate to have?

- \_\_\_1. Attractive personality
- \_\_\_2. Physically attractive
- \_\_\_3. Popular
- \_\_\_4. Understanding and considerate
- \_\_\_5. Has religious beliefs similar to mine
- \_\_\_6. High intellectual ability

- \_\_\_39. Which of the following do you most desire out of marriage?

- \_\_\_1. Happiness
- \_\_\_2. Security
- \_\_\_3. Companionship
- \_\_\_4. Personality growth

\_\_\_40. Which of the following do you believe to be the most important characteristic of a successful marriage?

- \_\_\_1. Respect
- \_\_\_2. Personality growth
- \_\_\_3. Emotional closeness
- \_\_\_4. Sexual satisfaction
- \_\_\_5. Sharing the same interests
- \_\_\_6. Effectively expressing true feelings to each other

\_\_\_41. Which of the following do you believe to be most important in achieving marital success?

- \_\_\_1. Being in love
- \_\_\_2. Determination to make the marriage succeed
- \_\_\_3. Having common interests
- \_\_\_4. Compatibility of personalities

\_\_\_42. Which of the following do you believe to be the major problem involved in marriage?

- \_\_\_1. In-laws
- \_\_\_2. Money
- \_\_\_3. Lack of appreciation
- \_\_\_4. Sexual adjustment
- \_\_\_5. Children
- \_\_\_6. Effectively expressing true feelings to each other

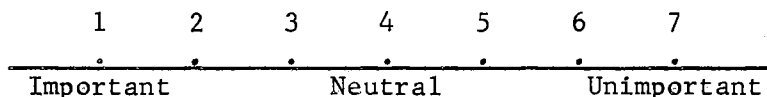
\_\_\_43. Which of the following do you consider to be the primary purpose of marriage?

- \_\_\_1. Companionship
- \_\_\_2. Love
- \_\_\_3. Reproduction
- \_\_\_4. Emotional and social stability of the individual
- \_\_\_5. Personality growth

\_\_\_44. Which of the following do you feel has influenced you most in the formation of your attitudes toward marriage?

- \_\_\_1. Parents
- \_\_\_2. Peers
- \_\_\_3. School
- \_\_\_4. Church

\_\_\_45. On the following scale circle the number at the point which most closely represents the degree to which you feel the qualities of determination and perseverance are important in achieving marital success.



\_\_\_46. If you were to marry at the present time do you feel your marriage would be:

- \_\_\_1. Very successful
- \_\_\_2. Successful
- \_\_\_3. Uncertain
- \_\_\_4. Unsuccessful
- \_\_\_5. Very unsuccessful



\_\_\_47. Have you had a previous family relations course in high school or college?

\_\_\_1. yes      \_\_\_2. no

\_\_\_48. Would you have desired to take more marriage and family relations courses in your formal education?

\_\_\_1. yes      \_\_\_2. no

\_\_\_49. How prepared do you feel for marriage at the present time?

___1. Very prepared	___4. Unprepared
___2. Prepared	___5. Very unprepared
___3. Uncertain	

\_\_\_50. In which of the following areas of marriage do you most desire information?

___1. Managing finances	___3. Childrearing
___2. Sexual relationship	___4. Communication

\_\_\_51-55. Please rank the following in importance in terms of how beneficial information in each area would be to you (insert appropriate number at left of each area: 1 - most important, 2 - second most important, 3 - third most important and 4 - least important).

\_\_\_ Managing finances

\_\_\_ Childrearing

\_\_\_ Sexual Relationship

\_\_\_ Communication

VITA

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Thesis: COLLEGE STUDENTS' FAVORABLENESS OF PERCEPTION CONCERNING  
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Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Sherman, Texas, March 19, 1945. Daughter of Mrs. Harry E. Kolb and the late Mr. Kolb. Married July 30, 1966, to Mr. Daniel Wayne Parker. One child: Priscilla Karol Parker, born February 2, 1970.

Education: Graduated from Sherman High School, Sherman, Texas, in May, 1963. Received a Bachelor of Science degree in Home Economics from Texas Technological University, Lubbock, Texas, with a major in Home Economics Education in June, 1967. Completed requirements for the Master of Science degree in May, 1971.

Professional Experience: Vocational Home Economics Teacher, Roosevelt High School, Lubbock, Texas, September, 1967, to May, 1968.

Professional Organizations: National Council on Family Relations, Omicron Nu, American Home Economics Association, and National Education Association.